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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 001267

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SUBJECT: CZECHS ON OCTOBER 12 GAERC

REF: STATE 170214

Classified By: Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Mike Dodman
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. At the October 12 GAERC, the EU will focus on the Middle East, the Russia-Georgia conflict, the Balkans, Sudan, and North Korea. On the Middle East, the EU will likely support sanctions for Iran, support President Abbas in Palestine, and address the security situation in Lebanon. The EU will caution Georgia and Russia to moderate their behavior. In the Balkans, the position of the EU will closely track that of the U.S. However, on Serbia, the conclusions will not mention ICTY compliance because the EU has repeatedly stated its position that full compliance is required. On Kosovo, EU members increasingly believe that final status will need to be imposed. On Sudan, the EU will support continued AMIS funding. On North Korea, the EU will likely support UNSC recommendations for a Chapter VII resolution with sanctions. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Poloff met October 12 with the Director of the Czech MFA's CFSP Department Vaclav Balek to discuss the October 12 GAERC and deliver ref A talking points. Balek said the Czech position remains unchanged on the Middle East, the Balkans, and Sudan, and they do not expect controversy at GAERC.

Middle East

¶3. (C) On Iran, Balek expects the text will be tough. EU member states think that diplomatic options have been exhausted, and therefore support the start of consultations on sanctions. However, the text will likely leave wiggle room in the event that Iran changes its position.

¶4. (C) On the Middle East Peace Process, Balek said the EU will issue conclusions supporting President Abbas and expressing optimism for the prospect of a Unity government. The EU will also welcome a three-month extension of the financial mechanism for humanitarian aid.

¶5. (C) On Lebanon, Balek said the Czechs support EU troop contributions to UNIFIL. In addition, the results of a fact-finding mission sent to Lebanon to assess the feasibility of deploying a separate EU mission along the Syrian border is expected this week. Balek said the Czechs are debating the feasibility of contributing up to ten experts (the most likely number is three) to clear unexploded ordinance in 2007.

Georgia-Russia Conflict

¶6. (C) Balek said the Czechs advocated putting the recent Georgia-Russia conflict on the agenda. They are happy with the draft conclusions, which urge both sides to moderate their behavior, and signal to Russia that its actions vis-a-vis Georgia have not been well-received in the EU.

The Balkans

¶7. (C) Balek said the Czech position remains unchanged on the Balkans. On the conclusions for Kosovo, the Czechs stressed language that supports the contact group and UN SE Ahtisaari.

¶8. (C) On Serbia, the conclusions will not include reference to full compliance with ICTY, although the EU and the Czechs still support ICTY compliance. Balek said the member states determined that reference to ICTY compliance was unnecessary because the June and September GAERC conclusions clearly state the EU position.

¶9. (C) On Bosnia, the EU will welcome the result of the elections.

Sudan

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¶10. (C) Balek reiterated the Czechs do not plan to be active on Africa issues because they lack the necessary historical relationships and expertise. On Sudan, the Czechs will not participate directly, but will support the EU consensus. The Czechs agree that international cooperation is needed to "pressure" the Sudanese government to accept UN involvement.

North Korea

¶11. (C) Balek said the EU will wait to issue final conclusions on North Korea until the UNSC proposes a response to the North Korean nuclear test. The final text will likely support the expected UNSC proposal for a Chapter VII resolution, and be consistent with the U.S. position.

GRABER